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ABSTRACT

The focus of the annual policy forum of the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) in 2000 was teacher quality, focusing on teacher shortages, teacher preparation, licensure, and certification. The forum was designed to give policymakers research-based information related to policy issues and to give them opportunities to share insights and experiences. Discussions were framed by three policy issue presentations: (1) "What Are States Doing To Recruit, Retain, and Compensate Quality Teachers" by Calvin Frazier, exploring what quality means and described efforts states are making to enhance teacher quality and teacher satisfaction; (2) "Alternative Certification and Teacher Quality," by Emily Feistritzer, providing an overview of key issues surrounding teacher preparation, including an exploration of teacher shortages and an overview of alternative licensure programs; and (3) "New Standards for Teacher Preparation" by Donna Gollnick, describing what the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education is doing to help raise the quality of teacher preparation. Question-and-answer sessions and team meetings are also summarized in this report. Appendixes contain the agenda, advance materials, the follow-up issued by McREL, and a summary of participant evaluations. (SLD)

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McREL
2000 Education
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submitted by:

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PARTICIPANTS AND PRESENTERS

Participants

Name	Title	State
Michael Allen	Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States	
Tom Brungardt	Chair, Kansas Professional Standards Board	KS
Annora Bryant	Office of Education Research and Improvement	
Judy Catchpole	State Superintendent, Department of Education	WY
Doug Christensen	Commissioner, Dept. of Education	NE
Ray Christensen	Secretary, Department of Education & Cultural Affairs	SD
Janet Curry	Member, State Board of Education	WY
Terry Ebert	President, Wyoming Association of School Administrators	WY
Linda Edwards	Director of Professional Development, ND Ed. Association	ND
Barbara Everist	State Senator	SD
Polly Feis	Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Education	NE
Martha Gage	Coordinator, Teacher Education, Department of Education	KS
Marilyn Hadley	Dean, College of Education, University of Nebraska – Kearney	NE
Mary Kay Hill	Legislative Liaison, Wyoming Department of Education	WY
Kent King	Acting Commissioner, Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Ed.	MO
Charles Ksir	Dean, College of Education	WY
Mike Lucas	Director, Teacher Education, Dept. of Elem. & Secondary Ed.	MO
Tom Magedanz	Legislative Research Council	SD
David Maurstad	Lieutenant Governor	NE
Gary McDowell	President, Wyoming Education Association	WY
Dean Myers	Dean, College of Education, Black Hills State University	SD
Rosemarie Myrdal	Lieutenant Governor	ND
Beverly Peterson	President, Nebraska State Board of Education	NE

Name	Title	State
Randall Relford	State Representative	MO
Max Ruhl	Dean, College of Education, NW Missouri State University	MO
Wayne Sanstead	Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction	ND
Steve Scott	Dean, College of Education, Pittsburg State University	KS
Nancy Thompson	State Senator	NE
Andy Tompkins	Commissioner of Education, Department of Education	KS
Lesta Turchen	Senior Administrator, South Dakota Board of Regents	SD
Janet Placek Welk	Executive Director, Education Standards and Practices Board	ND
Gretchen Wilbur	Chair of Education, Benedictine College	KS
Tom Wright	Member, Professional Teacher Standards Board	WY
Gloria Zradicka	Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States	

Presenters

Name	Title
Emily Feistritzer	President, Center for Education Information
Calvin Frazier	Senior Consultant, Education Commission of the States
Donna Gollnick	Senior Vice President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

For the past three years, McREL has brought together key officials from different offices and states in the Central Region with a two-fold purpose: (1) to provide policymakers with insights gained from education research in order to inform their decision making and (2) to provide policymakers with an opportunity to share experiences with one another related to issues of mutual concern.

Selection of Topics

McREL's first two annual policy forums focused on the topics of standards, assessment, and accreditation, as well as technology and professional development. The topics for last year's forum were standards-based accountability and teacher quality. This year, based upon feedback from participants of previous forums, discussions with state chiefs in the region, input from McREL's Board of Directors, and McREL's ongoing assessment of policy issues in the region, the focus of the forum was again on teacher quality. While last year's forum examined teacher quality in a general and broad way, this year's forum focused more specifically on teacher shortages, as well as teacher preparation, licensure and certification.

Selection of Participants

In past years, participants of McREL's policy forums have consisted of individually invited representatives of state education agencies, governor's offices, and legislatures from each state in the seven-state Central Region. For this year's forum, McREL hoped to bring to together more cohesive teams representing governor's offices, legislatures, state education agencies, and even teacher colleges from each state in the region to discuss key policy issues.

To this end, McREL asked chief state school officers in the region to select teams from their states to attend the forum. With the assistance Nebraska's Commissioner of Education, Dr. Doug Christensen, state education chiefs in six states in the region recruited teams from their respective states. As a result, 30 policymakers attended McREL's fourth annual Policy Forum — the largest turnout for any of these events.

In addition to these policymakers, two representatives from the Education Commission of the States, with which McREL has begun partnering on policy initiatives, and McREL's contract officer from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement attended the forum. Also, several McREL staff members attended the forum, including McREL's state liaisons — staff members responsible for coordinating McREL services to and communication with states in McREL's region. The liaisons attended the event in an effort to learn more about pertinent policy issues as well as develop and reinforce on-going relationships with policymakers in the region.

Agenda

The agenda (Appendix A) was designed to accomplish the two-fold purpose of the forum: 1) to provide policymakers with research-based information related to policy issues, and 2) to give them opportunities to share insights and experiences with one another. To accomplish the first purpose, McREL invited nationally known experts to give presentations on the policy issues at hand, including current policy concerns, policies states have adopted, and the effects those policies have had on schools and students.

To accomplish the second purpose, the forum was designed to provide opportunities for policymakers to break into state-alike and role-alike groups to discuss policy issues. During state-alike breakout sessions, participants worked together to begin devising strategies for addressing teacher shortages and teacher quality issues in their states. During the job-alike meetings, participants shared experiences and strategies from their own states with one another. After these meetings, participants briefly summarized their conversations to the larger group.

At the conclusion of the forum, participants were asked to identify ways in which they could maintain the conversations and move forward with ideas generated during the forum. In addition, they were asked to suggest ways in which McREL could assist their efforts to enact effective education-related policies in their states.

PROCEEDINGS OF FORUM

The forum began with Dr. Tim Waters, McREL's Executive Director, Commissioner Christensen, and Peg Portscheller, McREL's Director of Policy Initiatives, providing opening remarks and introductions. In her opening remarks, Ms. Portscheller noted that the forum's presenters, whose presentations are summarized below, were intended to serve as "provocateurs," stimulating thinking about issues related to teacher shortages and teacher preparation.

Presentation: What Are States Doing to Recruit, Retain, and Compensate Quality Teachers?

Dr. Calvin Frazier, former Commissioner of Education of Colorado, who is now at the forefront of teacher quality conversations across the nation as a senior consultant with the Education Commission of the States, gave a 30-minute presentation on issues for policymakers to consider when developing ways to improve teacher quality in their states. Dr. Frazier noted that teacher quality is one of top three issues confronting policymakers in most states. Teacher quality also tends to appear high on lists of parents' concerns. It is worth noting, however, that most parents express satisfaction with the quality of teachers in their children's schools.

Frazier pointed out that *quality* is the key word when talking about recruiting, retaining, and compensating teachers. States should carefully define teacher quality and ask themselves whether their teacher assessment and licensure systems truly measure and ensure teacher quality.

Low teacher salaries, of course, exacerbate teacher shortages and hamper efforts to improve teacher quality. For example, in Seattle, WA, Microsoft Corp. has lured graduates of teacher colleges away from teaching with starting salaries of $60,000 per year — as opposed to $26,000 offered by local school districts. In response to such competitive pressures, some states are beginning to raise salaries across the board. Others have created loan forgiveness programs and scholarships — which are in some cases, targeted to hard-to-fill positions. At the local level, districts are beginning to reward incoming, veteran teachers for their full years of experience. And in San Diego, a high-priced real estate market, the district has created subsidized housing to attract teachers to their district. Another strategy for raising teacher compensation, not yet commonplace in the U.S., is to offer tax breaks to teachers. For example, in Taiwan, a country with many high-paying technology jobs, teachers do not have to pay income tax.

In terms of recruitment, Frazier noted that many states are just now beginning to launch coordinated efforts to recruit teachers to openings in their states. He added that teacher colleges also need to consider working in conjunction with community colleges to attract more students — especially minority students and students from inner-city and rural areas — to the profession. Lastly, teaching mentoring or induction programs have been shown to be an effective way to retain new teachers. A recent study in the Denver metro area found that nearly 100 percent of teachers who went through mentoring programs stayed in the profession, compared with only about 50 percent of teachers who were not mentored by experience teachers. Despite the effectiveness of mentoring programs, few states provide support to districts to create and maintain induction programs for novice teachers.

Presentation: Alternative Certification and Teacher Quality

Dr. C. Emily Feistritzer, a nationally known authority on alternative licensure and teacher preparation, provided an overview of key issues surrounding teacher preparation, including providing a better understanding of "teacher shortages" and an overview of alternative licensure programs. She began her presentation by stating that contrary to the gloom-and-doom statements being made about teacher shortages and teacher quality, she is "more optimistic about the future of teaching in America than ever." For starters, the projected need for 2.2 million teachers in the next 10 years is actually apace with the number of teachers already being graduated from teacher colleges. In other words, according to her research, there are already enough fully certified people to fill the vacancies, even *excluding* alternative routes. The problem, however, is most of people who are currently being trained to teach do not want to teach where the vacancies are — in high-poverty, inner-city, and rural schools. In fact, most traditionally prepared teachers do not want to teach farther than 50 miles from their home.

Feistritzer argued that our current model of teacher preparation — in which candidates progress from high school to college, where they enter a teacher preparation program, and subsequently teach "until they drop" — is an unrealistic expectation. She said her research indicates that most traditionally prepared teachers have little desire to teach in areas of most need, or to make a career out of teaching — only 40 percent of traditionally prepared teachers remain in the profession after just three years of teaching. On the other hand, according to Feistritzer's research, fully 87

percent of alternatively prepared teachers are still in the profession after three years of teaching. Moreover, alternatively prepared teachers show more willingness to accept less desirable positions. For example, New York City public school officials were recently shocked when 2,700 people showed up to a one-day job fair to recruit alternatively prepared teachers to their schools, deemed by many teachers to be "undesirable" places to work. Most candidates who showed up at the job fair were mid-career changers who wanted the challenge of teaching in inner-city schools.

Feistrizer said she is seeing a "major shift" in the supply side of teacher preparation. Currently, three out of every 10 people studying to be teachers are doing so through post-baccalaureate, alternative programs. At this time, 40 states now have alternative licensing routes. However, the quality of these routes varies greatly. Many alternative certification programs really amount to "emergency" licensure programs, that is, truncated preparation programs which often fail to ensure that qualified candidates enter the profession. In Feistritzer's estimation, only 12 states have alternative routes that come close to being exemplary.

Exemplary alternative programs, according to Feistritzer, should be *market driven*; that is, they should be designed specifically to help fill vacancies in the marketplace. Secondly, alternative certification programs should be *tailor-made* to suit not only candidates in the programs but also the specific jobs they are being trained to fill. Thirdly, alternative preparation programs need to include an element of teaching mentoring in which prospective teachers work with trained mentor-teachers.

To facilitate the creation of effective alternative preparation programs, state officials need to be quite clear as to their standards for teachers and how they will assess whether teachers meet those standards. States cannot be arbitrary about these measures. They cannot simply consider taking a certain number or type of courses as indicators of quality. Such measures — especially if those courses are not germane to the job of teaching — will likely discourage serious candidates and mid-career changers from entering the profession.

Presentation: New Standards for Teacher Preparation

Dr. Donna Gollnick, Senior Vice President of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), described what NCATE is doing to help raise the quality of teacher preparation. She began her presentation by defining teacher quality as teachers who are fully licensed and have majored in their subject area. She noted that research finds evidence that poorly qualified teachers are most likely to teach in areas of highest needs.

At the state level, two states that have undertaken concerted efforts to improve teacher quality — North Carolina and Connecticut — have also seen improved student scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). North Carolina, for example, boosted teacher salaries, required all state-funded teacher colleges to become NCATE accredited, and created a professional teaching standards board. Connecticut, likewise, raised salaries, required teachers to obtain master's degrees to maintain their licenses, created a state-funded mentoring program for novice teachers, and adopted portfolio assessments for teachers. Officials in Connecticut, which now has the highest salaries in the country, are reporting no shortages of teachers in their state.

Gollnick also highlighted NCATE's new standards for accreditation. The most important change in these standards is that they are now performance-based. That is, NCATE now requires teacher colleges to show what students know and demonstrate, rather than simply checking off courses. Teacher colleges must demonstrate their students' content as well as pedagogical and professional knowledge. Also, colleges will be encouraged to show evidence that their graduates can help students learn — either through student achievement or employer evaluations. In other words, NCATE will begin asking colleges the following questions:

- What data show that candidates know their content areas?
- How do faculty know students are competent teachers?
- What happens to candidates not performing at expected levels?
- How are data being compiled and reviewed to improve programs?

When faced with teacher shortages, Gollnick noted that there are several options states and districts might choose: 1) they can raise standards and salaries, as Connecticut and North Carolina have done, 2) they can develop better reciprocity agreements with other states, 3) they can streamline hiring procedures, and 4) they can focus on encouraging and supporting better induction programs for new teachers. Quick entry programs, however, are not a viable solution as poorly trained teachers without experience in clinical settings tend to have difficulty with curriculum and lesson planning. Thus, states should close loopholes created by quick-entry programs.

Audience Reaction: Moderated Q & A

Following the presentations, the three speakers participated in a panel discussion, during which participants asked questions of and interacted with the presenters. During this session, Dr. Feistritzer defended her assertion that alternatively certified teachers are more likely to stay in the profession — even though Linda Darling-Hammond's research has stated otherwise. Feistritzer noted that Linda Darling-Hammond may be including *Teach for America* participants in her data, even though *Teach for America* is specially designed to be a two-year program, not an alternative certification program. Feistritzer said that on average, 85 percent of alternatively certified teachers are still teaching after five years — a much higher rate than traditionally certified teachers. This is not surprising given that alternatively certified teachers tend to be mid-career changers who are more certain of their career choice and perhaps more importantly, are not as likely to leave the profession to raise a family — one of the biggest reasons new teachers leave the profession.

One state chief noted that states should embrace alternative certification programs as a viable route to the profession and work to develop standards for them, rather than putting the concept into a particular ideological camp. In other words, rather than resisting alternative education programs, state education agencies need to examine how to best prepare teachers through alternative routes. Dr. Frazier agreed, noting that states are constitutionally bound to be in charge of education in their states. Thus, rather than relying upon national solutions or national groups to provide all the answers, state policymakers should work together to find and devise solutions to these problems.

State Team Meetings

Following the panel session, participants convened state-alike groups to discuss the following question: *How can we better recruit, retain, and compensate quality teachers?* After a 45-minute breakout session, the group was reconvened to report briefly on their discussions, which are summarized below.

The **Kansas** team discussed ways to fund scholarships and loan-forgiveness programs for teachers, create better licensure portability with other states, promote teaching as a career through the media, and support alternative licensure programs. The team also agreed that mentoring programs should be funded by the state.

The **Missouri** team agreed that salaries in the state need to be raised and discussed ways to encourage small districts to share teachers in hard-to-staff positions. Mentoring, they decided, was the biggest issue they need to look at since it is currently required, but not funded, by the state. The state will also need to examine alternative certification programs, especially for the two largest districts in the state — St. Louis and Kansas City, where the loss of full state accreditation status is exacerbating teacher recruitment problems.

Through their meeting, the **Nebraska** contingent learned that there are three separate groups in the state examining teacher compensation issues and concluded that these groups need to work together. The Nebraska policymakers also identified a need for better data, including information on what percentage of teachers have what level of experience, where the shortages are, why teachers leave their positions, etc.

The **North Dakota** team concluded that it would look into ways to encourage districts to staff hard-to-fill positions by sharing teachers and by utilizing distance learning technologies. In addition, the team decided that it was important for the state to examine the quality of mentoring programs as well as alternative licensure programs.

South Dakota's policymakers decided that the state needs to examine the issue of when and how they should measure teacher competencies. They will also examine how the state might fund mentoring programs, and whether technology could be used to provide novice teachers with greater access to master teachers.

The **Wyoming** group used their meeting as an opportunity to create a plan for putting together a major task force that will be charged with finding ways to better recruit teachers and school leaders. It is anticipated that this task force would present its findings to the state legislature at the same time lawmakers review the state's funding model. The group also reported that it intends to use the information presented by Dr. Frazier in designing a new process for teacher preparation and recruitment.

Reflections on Monday's Sessions

On Tuesday morning, Dr. Doug Christensen offered reflections on the previous day's presentations and discussions. His first observation was that policymakers need to be very clear about the purpose of their policies. Those making policy decisions are apt to leap to easy answers without thinking about why they are doing what they are doing. He noted that while being interviewed about Nebraska's unique statewide assessment program, a reporter from a national publication observed that she had heard almost identical rhetoric in the other 49 states. In short, it seems, that policymakers often jump on bandwagons without doing the really hard work of dealing with "why and what for."

Second, he noted that the local level is the point at which policy gets played out. But all too often there is a weak link between policymaker's intentions and local practices and outcomes. This policy link is not strengthened by stricter mandates, but rather through increased support from the state.

Third, he pointed out what he referred to as the "loose-tight coupling" phenomenon in policymaking; that is, when you tightly couple something, you are loosely coupling something else. For example, when instruction is tightly coupled with assessments, it often becomes loosely coupled with standards.

Lastly, Dr. Christensen observed that "logic is not the same thing as validity." That is, while it may seem logical to think of standards, assessments, and accountability as linear, that is not how they should be implemented. That is, before creating tough accountability, states must support the creation of standards-based classrooms. By jumping too quickly to assessments, states squeeze out the more important work of changing what is happening in classrooms.

After Dr. Christensen's presentation, participants were encouraged to give their own reactions. During this feedback session, it was noted that policymakers sometimes feel like they are rushing to solve a problem without knowing whether it's really a problem or the *right* problem to be solving. Thus, McREL could assist policymakers by providing, collecting, and analyzing data on a region-wide basis.

Role-Alike Meetings

Following the reflection session, participants moved into role-alike groups to discuss current and prospective strategies for improving teacher recruitment, retention and compensation. After a 45-minute breakout session, the groups reconvened to share what each group discussed, as summarized below.

A group of representatives from **education associations** discussed teacher retention at length, especially what causes burnout and what can be done to alleviate teachers' feelings of intensification. A team of representatives from **teacher colleges** discussed scholarships and the importance of properly targeting scholarships to address specific teacher shortages. Wyoming, for example, once

had a scholarship program, but it was not targeted to any particular type of teacher. As a result, many teachers whose tuition were funded through state-funded scholarships were unable to find jobs in the state.

A group of state **legislators** noted that their positions require them to concentrate on many issues — not just education issues. Thus, they need educators to 1) identify the most important issues to be addressed, and 2) develop consensus around what needs to be done. The group representing **governor's offices** discussed teacher salaries and noted that Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation absorbs a large amount of local funds, making it difficult to raise salaries. They would like to see the federal government fully fund IDEA mandates.

The **state chiefs** and other **SEA representatives** discussed the need to bring retired teachers back to the classroom, at least on part-time basis. They also discussed how to best design scholarship programs for prospective teachers and strategies for raising teacher salaries.

Conclusion and Next Steps

At the conclusion of the forum, Dr. Christensen and Dr. Waters led the group in a discussion of what steps should be taken to continue the conversations started at this forum and to take action on some of the ideas generated. This discussion – and McREL's proposed responses are summarized in a letter sent from Dr. Waters to policy forum participants, provided here as Appendix C. An evaluation of the forum (see Appendix D) found that most participants rated the forum's overall quality as excellent.

APPENDIX A: Agenda

McREL 4th Annual Education Policy Forum

August 14-15, 2000
Inverness Hotel and Golf Resort, Englewood, CO

Agenda
Dress is business casual

Monday, August 14

11:30 – 1:00 pm *Conference Room B*	Lunch & Networking *(Build your own sandwich)*	
1:00 – 1:20 pm *Conference Room A*	Welcome and Overview	**Dr. Timothy Waters** ***Executive Director, McREL***
		Dr. Doug Christensen ***Commissioner, Nebraska Department of Education***
1:20 - 1:30 pm	Announcements	**Peg Portscheller** ***Director of Policy Initiatives, McREL***
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Presentation: *What Are States Doing to Recruit, Retain, and Compensate Quality Teachers?*	**Dr. Calvin Frazier** ***Senior Consultant, Education Commission of the States***
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Presentation: *Alternative Certification and Teacher Quality*	**Dr. C. Emily Feistrizter** ***President, National Center for Education Information***
	Presentation: *New Standards for Teacher Preparation*	**Dr. Donna M. Gollnick** ***Senior Vice President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education***
3:30 – 3:45 pm	Refreshment Break	
3:45 – 4:15 pm	Audience Reaction: Moderated Q & A	
4:15 – 5:00 pm	State Team Meetings *How Can We Better Recruit, Retain, and Compensate Quality Teachers?*	
5:00 – 5:15 pm	Reporting Out by State	
	Dinner on your own	

Tuesday, August 15

7:30 – 8:30 am *Conference Room A*	Breakfast Buffet	
8:30 – 9:00 am *Conference Room A*	Reflections on Yesterday's Session	**Dr. Doug Christensen** ***Commissioner,*** ***Nebraska Department of Education***
9:00 – 9:45 am	Role-Alike Meetings *Participants break into role-alike groups to discuss current and prospective strategies for improving teacher recruitment, retention and compensation*	***(Chiefs, Governor's Aides, Legislators, Deans, Others)***
10:00 – 10:15 am	Reporting Out	
10:15 – 10:30 am	Break / Check Out	
10:30 – 11:30 am	Next Steps *Where do we go from here?* *What can McREL do to help?*	**Dr. Doug Christensen** ***Commissioner,*** ***Nebraska Department of Education*** **Dr. Timothy Waters** ***Executive Director,*** ***McREL***
11:30 – 12:30 am *Conference Room A*	Lunch *Evaluations*	

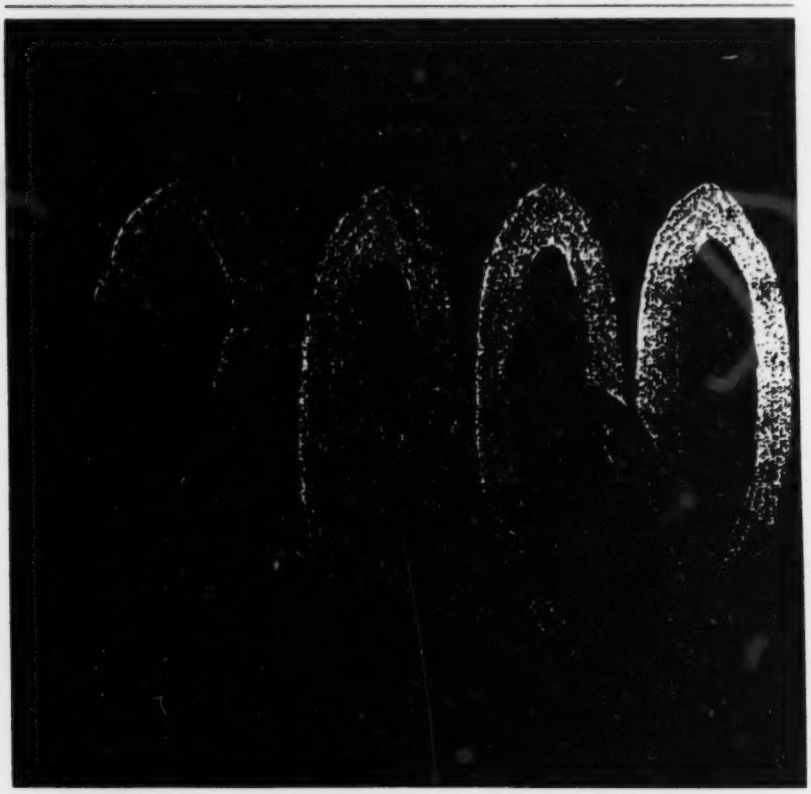
APPENDIX B: Advance Materials

Standards and Teacher Quality

Entering the New Millennium

Candidates at NCATE-accredited schools of education in the new millennium will experience a focus on performance unlike any seen by candidates in the 20th century, according to Mr. Wise and Ms. Leibbrand. Subject-matter knowledge alone is not enough to ensure effective teaching.

BY ARTHUR E. WISE AND JANE A. LEIBBRAND



IN REVIEWING the literature of education reform from the last decade, one finds a sharp difference of opinion regarding how to improve teacher quality. Members of the profession and many policy makers believe that teachers should be well grounded in the content they plan to teach and have a firm grasp of how to teach it effectively to a diverse community of students. The "how to teach" part includes knowledge of child and adolescent development, instructional strategies for various types of learners, assessment and evaluation strategies, classroom management, strategies for teaching those of differing abilities, and so on. This research-based knowledge is gained through formal study and supervised practice over time in clinical settings.

A few members of the education community and some policy makers, on the other hand, have a different view. They claim that teachers need only subject-matter knowledge in order to teach well. They argue, in effect, for an end to state licensing of teachers — for complete deregulation of entry to teaching.

These two views lead to wide variances in policy formation at all levels. Moreover, both views have support in teacher policy development, which gives a schizophrenic character to policy efforts and results.

The "deregulators" would allow those who hold any bachelor's degree to enter the classroom. This group is not clear about how it expects decision makers to judge whether candidates have mastered subject-

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Illustration by Karen Stolpet

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matter knowledge, since they are skeptical of content-related portions of teaching tests. The group does support the measures some states have taken to handle teacher shortages: issuing "emergency certification" to allow individuals with little or no teacher preparation to assume responsibility as full-fledged teachers. Such provisions were quite popular in the 1960s. And despite their disastrous consequences in the 1960s and 1970s, they are once again being resurrected to serve as a quick fix to a complicated problem as teacher shortages become more severe in certain subjects and in certain geographic areas.

However, there is a growing awareness that emergency certification has not raised student achievement. Now the current Administration is calling for "fully licensed" teachers in the classroom as a provision in the proposed reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The significance of this proposal cannot be overestimated. For the first time ever, a federal Administration has called for fully licensed teachers to teach our nation's children. Why? Research has demonstrated that teachers who are fully licensed are more effective than those who are not.[1]

On the state and local levels, steps are being taken to support teacher knowledge, teacher development, and clinical practice. States that believe in the value of teacher preparation devise policies governing accreditation, state licensing, and meaningful professional development. Institutions that value teacher preparation demonstrate their commitment by meeting professional accreditation standards, by instituting and supporting professional development schools or clinical practice schools, by creating programs that help candidates develop competencies assessed through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and in other ways that embrace teaching as a knowledge-based profession.

On the other hand, states and districts that have a problem with teacher supply or that do not see the value of teacher preparation create quick alternative routes to teaching. The goal is to bypass "those education courses," which are seen as unnecessary hurdles that teacher candidates must jump over in order to gain a license. Of course, these states and districts may value teacher preparation but face the dilemma of ensuring that there are enough "teachers" as a "cash cow" than as a professional field of endeavor. These institutions do not see themselves as part of the profession of teaching and may not participate in accreditation or maintain up-to-date knowledge of research in the field.

So schizophrenic on this issue are policy makers that it is not uncommon to find states proudly touting contradictory policies.

Teacher Preparation: From Status Quo to Rapid Change

Certainly in the past — and even today — some of the criticisms leveled at teacher education by the "deregulators" and policy makers were valid. Many education courses were of the "Mickey Mouse" variety 20 years ago, and some still are. After all, there are still some 700 unaccredited schools of education in the U.S. These schools have not prepared for or faced professional accountability. How did this situation arise?

Until very recently, standards for teaching were usually set quite low, for historical and economic reasons. When normal schools began in the 1800s, teachers knew little more than their students. American society did not require a highly educated work force. Instead, it required large numbers of people with basic skills, and the schools satisfied this need.

In the early to mid-1900s, most policy makers viewed teaching as a routine activity that could be picked up "on the job" with some supervision. Lax preparation and entry standards were the rule. By the 1950s, teaching had come to be viewed as a job one could "fall back on" if nothing else worked out.

In the absence of a strong voice from the profession, which did not assert itself until the late 1980s, state departments of education took on the task of defining standards for teacher preparation and for entry into the profession. Each state set its own licensing requirements. State departments did eventually try to bring some uniformity to the expectations for preparation through NASDTEC (National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification), the organization of state department of education officials responsible for approving education programs. However, NASDTEC has served to reinforce "seat time" in teacher or administrator preparation programs rather than as a result of independent appraisals of their readiness to teach or manage. There has been little coordination or articulation between the states and institutions.

Over the course of the 20th century, policy makers' attention to standards waxed and waned, both in response to changes in pressure to fill teaching positions and because the product coming out of the schools was sufficient for immediate needs. Frequently, political rather than educational considerations were foremost in the minds of local and state policy makers.

By midcentury, the profession realized that it needed a stronger set of commonly agreed-upon standards. And in 1954 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) was born as an independent entity. For most of the 20th century, accreditation agencies had focused on inputs (number and qualifications of faculty, library resources, and so on). From the 1950s to the 1980s, NCATE, like other professional accreditation agencies, began to focus more on the quality of the curriculum — what was offered to the candidates. This was a step forward, but no mechanism was in place in the states, the institutions, or the accrediting agencies to determine the effectiveness of programs to prepare teachers or administrators. Continuing professional development was also a hodgepodge, delivered in one-day sessions by school districts or by university professors who came and went without interacting with school faculty. Most states had no requirement for continuing professional education.

Then, in 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was published. Its appearance altered the education landscape for the final two decades of the century and will continue to influence education policy in the new century. The report spawned what has come to be known as the standards movement.

In the 1980s, three standards movements that grew out of reformist ideas converged to shape today's redesigned school of education in accredited institutions. The content knowledge standards movement created a framework for core knowledge in the various fields of teaching. Student standards followed, and the [illegible] by standards for what teachers should know in order to help students reach the chal-

quo is crumbling. The norms for teacher preparation and licensing that we have known are beginning to change.[2]

Policy makers are passing legislation and regulations that address teacher accountability and academic ability. On the national front, the Higher Education Act of 1998 institutes new accountability measures in teacher preparation. Institutions and states that receive funding under this act must prepare "report cards" on the performance of their teacher preparation programs. The regulations require institutions to report the pass rates on each teacher licensing exam taken by their graduates. New York and Texas have respectively declared that 80% and 70% of each institution's school of education graduates must pass licensing examinations. Massachusetts has made similar pronouncements, not yet enacted in legislation.

Finally, as the standards movement matured and as the debates over content waned, the next big question loomed in the 1990s: how to determine whether teachers, administrators, and students have met the standards. In the teaching profession, determining whether teacher candidates — and teachers and administrators — have met standards is to be ascertained through "performance assessment." This is where the field stands as it enters the new century. The focus is on finding reliable and valid ways to assess teachers' performance — the ability to integrate content with ways to teach it to students in the diverse classrooms of today. Policy makers are looking for evidence that teaching has made a difference. In other words, they are looking for an increase in student achievement scores.

NCATE 2000: Standards and Assessments in the 21st Century

Candidates at NCATE-accredited schools of education in the new millennium will experience a focus on performance unlike any seen by candidates in the 20th century. In the 21st century, beginning with the NCATE 2000 standards (http://www.ncate.org), institutions accredited by NCATE will be expected to focus on candidate performance. Teacher candidates will be expected to show mastery of the content knowledge in their fields and to demonstrate that they can teach effectively. Administrators will be expected to demonstrate that they can create an environment conducive to student learning. All candidates will understand the criteria by which their professional competence will be judged. Multiple assessments of candidate performance will be the rule. Institutions will set benchmark levels of performance, based on exemplars provided by NCATE-affiliated professional associations.

For years, Alverno College in Milwaukee has served as an example of a college that bases its programs on performance. Its approach is one model for developing institutional systems of performance assessment. The college faculty has determined five outcomes, stated as abilities, that candidates should possess. Faculty members integrate the expected abilities into each course.

For example, one of the abilities is "effective communication," and a specific expectation is that candidates can communicate effectively with a particular audience using technology. Teacher candidates are expected to meet a certain level of effectiveness, and acceptable behaviors are specified in writing. The college has come to agree on "how good is good enough" and on what successful performance should look like.[3]

Candidates experience hundreds of assessments throughout their college careers at Alverno and are taught to view them as opportunities to learn. Giving and receiving feedback becomes a routine process that is part of each candidate's professional experience. Professors have developed their courses to integrate the expected abilities and have determined the criteria that will be used to judge performance.[4]

Most schools of education — indeed, most departments within colleges and universities — have not specified in a public fashion the abilities they expect of their graduates, nor have they designed assessments of actual performance, with specified acceptable performance levels. However, some schools of education have done this, and others are beginning to.

In addition, colleges of education will be expected to assess the effectiveness of

"Look, mom. We got them instead of stars on our papers."

their programs and to use the information to improve programs. The institutional assessment system should provide comprehensive information on candidate performance — including content knowledge, professional and pedagogical knowledge, and the effect on student learning. The college of education will be expected to provide evidence from both internal and external sources. Internal evidence could include grade-point averages, examinations for entry to the school of education, portfolios, lesson plans, videos of classroom performance, written reflections on teaching, and so on. For accreditation, the school of education will be expected to summarize and sample these types of evidence. The school will also be expected to show that benchmark levels of acceptable performance have been set and adhered to and that national benchmarks, where available, have been used to guide the setting of institutional benchmarks. External sources of evidence could include such data as results on state licensing exams by field, employer evaluations, and placement rates.

Programs should be designed to prepare the candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards. NCATE is now working with its member professional associations to revise teaching standards to focus on teacher candidate performance. NCATE's elementary standards (http://www.ncate.org) and social studies standards (http://www.ncss.org) are serving as models for other teacher preparation standards in the process of revision.

Other NCATE 2000 standards focus on clinical practice, diversity, faculty performance and development, and resources. These standards, oriented to unit capacity, encourage institutions to provide the resources for candidates to learn and develop. As an example of the kind of standards we are talking about, an overview of the proposed NCATE 2000 standards for each teacher education unit appears as a sidebar (page 614), but detailed rubrics and additional explanatory information are also available on the NCATE website.

In terms of clinical practice, candidates will be called upon to demonstrate what they actually know and can do at levels expected by the profession in clinical settings. NCATE-accredited institutions will be expected to collaboratively design and implement clinical practice with P-12 schools. The partners also select and prepare clinical faculty members "to mentor and supervise teacher candidates." The collaborative nature of the relationship envisioned between the teacher education institution and P-12 schools in the new millennium takes teacher preparation to a new place. Teacher preparation is a part of the "real world"; P-12 schools become sites for clinical practice where candidates receive ongoing support and feedback about their performance. Master teachers engage in joint supervision to mold beginning teachers into effective practitioners.

> Having faculty members model best professional practice is an expectation designed to change instruction.

The NCATE 2000 standards will serve as an impetus for change as institutions strive to meet them. While only a few schools are functioning near the level of collaboration described in the standards, most are somewhere between the new standard and the old student teaching model.

The diversity standard expects institutions to prepare candidates who can help all children learn. Candidates should be able to develop a classroom climate that values diversity. Institutions are expected to provide candidates with field experiences with diverse and exceptional populations. They are expected to incorporate diversity issues throughout the curriculum — not simply in a single course on diversity.

An emphasis on technology is woven throughout the standards. NCATE expects schools of education to prepare teachers who can effectively integrate technology into instruction and to model this integration within the school of education.

The faculty performance standard expects faculty members to model the best in professional practice. The standard also expects faculty performance and its effect on candidate performance to be evaluated. Tying faculty performance to candidate performance significantly ratchets up the expectations for this standard. Having faculty members model best professional practice is an expectation designed to change instruction; faculty members should be able to model the strategies that they expect their students to use. The standard on governance and resources is designed to help determine whether the education unit has the leadership, authority, and resources to prepare candidates in the programs it offers.

Latest Research Shows Standards Make a Difference

Critics of these developments, mostly conservative scholars, think that teacher preparation is a waste of time. They have lobbied state policy makers with the argument that subject-matter knowledge is enough — that teachers should be licensed with only a bachelor's degree in an academic discipline. However, these critics have not been informed by the latest research.[3] In May 1999, ETS announced the results of an in-depth study of teacher qualifications, academic ability, and pass rates on teacher licensure examinations. ETS examined the PRAXIS scores of 270,000 test-takers and correlated these with college entrance examination scores of the candidates. The ETS effort is the latest and one of the most comprehensive studies done to date on teacher qualifications.[4]

Interestingly, those candidates who had enrolled in teacher preparation programs in addition to study in a content area passed the content examination in significantly higher numbers than those who had never enrolled in teacher preparation but presumably had majored in a content area. Graduates of institutions with NCATE-accredited schools of education scored highest of all test-takers nationally.

Of all candidates who took the exam, 91% of those graduating from NCATE-accredited institutions passed, while 84% of those graduating from institutions not accredited by NCATE did so. Of those who had never enrolled in a teacher preparation program, the pass rate was 74%.

(Continued on page 621)

Standards and Teacher Quality

(Continued from page 616)

Several thousand more teacher candidates would have qualified for a state license if graduates of the non-NCATE institutions had passed the exam at the same rate as the NCATE graduates. In a time of high demand for qualified candidates, this result would make a difference to school districts looking for qualified teachers.

The results of this study echo those of hundreds of other studies that have demonstrated that well-prepared teachers 1) have a greater impact on student achievement, 2) are more attuned to students' needs, and 3) are better able to devise instruction to meet individual needs.

As accountability measures for teaching and teacher preparation occupy policy makers in their quest to improve student achievement, teacher test scores, especially in the content areas, will be closely scrutinized as a measure of teacher competence. Once the scores on content knowledge tests are made public, the focus will fall more heavily on the academic departments that provide instruction in the subject-matter majors, and thus the institution as a whole will come under review. A recent study by the Education Trust raises questions about the level of difficulty of questions on the ETS licensing exam and also raises the issue of cutoff scores. States now use varying cutoff scores, which makes comparability of results difficult.

There is also the question of whether the current licensing tests are aligned well enough with the standards for teacher knowledge that have been developed by the relevant professional associations. NCATE has initiated an effort in which representatives of the subject-matter associations are reviewing the PRAXIS exam and providing ETS with feedback on alignment with their standards. ETS is now revising the content area tests.

Supply, Demand, and Quality

All these standards do not solve the perennial problem that administrators face every fall: hiring enough qualified teachers to fill every classroom. Everyone likes high standards until hiring season, and then states and districts begin to use loopholes in the law or seek legislation allowing for alternative certification to fill the empty classrooms. One solution that would generate parental and public awareness of the unevenness of teacher qualifications would be the educational equivalent of a truth-in-labeling law. Only those who meet increasingly rigorous state requirements should be given the title "teacher." Others whom school districts must hire to fill vacant classrooms or to teach courses for which they are not qualified would be known by a lesser title, perhaps "para-teacher" or the like. As more parents, policy makers, and members of the public start asking difficult questions, public officials will have to decide what steps to take to ensure that a competent, caring, and qualified teacher teaches every child.

There is no question that standards for entry into the teaching profession have been low. States originally set the standards low to allow a ready supply of teachers. This system, built during the Industrial Age, no longer serves America's needs in the Information Age.

The profession has been at work for more than 15 years, developing new, more rigorous standards and a system for their use. States are beginning to integrate the profession's standards into their requirements. This is the same process the states have used to upgrade standards in the established professions. The teaching profession must continue on its journey, implementing the new system of high standards to serve America's schoolchildren and American society well into the new millennium.

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Linda Darling-Hammond, *Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand, and Standards* (New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1999).
6. *The Academic Quality of Prospective Teachers: The Impact of Admissions and Licensure Testing* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1999). ☒

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The Truth Behind the 'Teacher Shortage'

by C. Emily Feistritzer
Originally published in The Wall Street Journal, January 28, 1998

The teacher shortage "crisis" has been resurrected -- again. It seems every few years this issue is trotted out and used to get more money, more programs, more publicity, more political points -- all in the name of meeting the huge demand, now said to be two million new teachers in the next decade.

This time it's President Clinton who's doing the scaremongering. In his State of the Union address, he asked lawmakers to approve billions of dollars in federal aid, in part to help recruit and hire new teachers. Several members of Congress also have proposed their own expensive programs to ward off teacher shortages.

But before the additional billions are spent on scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to recruit millions of new teachers, many of whom will never find a teaching job, the administration and Congress need to look at some of the realities of so-called teacher crisis.

The nation has recently been hiring at the rate of two million "new" teachers per decade, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The National Center for Education Statistics projects that annual growth in the number of teachers needed will *decline* as the current enrollment surge gets through high school during the next decade. "We don't see anything that would indicate there will be general teacher shortages," says Daniel Hecker, a BLS economist.

The first problem with the claim that we'll need millions of new teachers is in what exactly "new" means. When most people hear those words, they think it means teachers who have never taught before. Well, that is not what it means.

An NCES analysis shows that, of the 139,000 "new" public school teachers hired in 1993-94 (the latest year for which data are available), 42% had just finished a college program and had never taught before. Twenty-four percent were doing something other than going to college the year before teaching but were teaching for the first time. The remaining 34% of "new" teachers were actually former teachers coming back into the profession. Six years ago, the figure was even higher: In 1987-88, 52% of the "new" teachers were re-entering the profession. "It is not clear how much of this shift was due to changes in the relative sizes of the supply pools and how much was due to the policy preferences of schools to hire first-time teachers at lower salaries," NCES analyst Mary Rollefson noted.

The largest teachers' union, the National Education Association, reported last year that of the 2.2 million people working as teachers in the academic year 1995-96, only 2.1% were teaching for the first time. Thus the nation is hiring -- and is projected to need to hire -- approximately 45,000 newly trained teachers per year. That is a far cry from the 200,000 the "crisis" proponents would have you believe.

Now, just how many newly minted teachers is the country already turning out each year?

Every year in this decade, colleges and universities have been awarding more than 100,000 bachelor's degrees in education, and the numbers continue to grow. There were more than six million people holding at least a bachelor's degree in education in the U.S. in 1993, according to the Census Bureau. What's more, only about three out of four current teachers have a bachelor's degree in education. In all, there are plenty of people who are fully qualified to teach who are not teaching: at least four million of them.

Numerous surveys of high school and college students indicate there is widespread interest in teaching as a career. If even a portion of the young people expressing an interest in teaching become teachers, the demand will more than be met. And that doesn't take into account the huge interest in teaching that older people have -- people with experience from other careers, early retirees from the military and other occupations, former teachers, people who have raised their children and now want to teach.

It is this huge potential work force that is most ill served by the current system -- from the ivory towers of the self-described experts on who is qualified to teach, to the colleges that are supposed to train teachers, to the state-level departments that are responsible for licensing them, to the schools that are ultimately responsible for hiring teachers. Anyone who wants to make more new teachers available can begin by dismantling this elaborate system, which locks out potentially highly qualified teachers while accrediting many who don't belong in the classroom.

But to claim that there is a teacher shortage is simply wrong -- there isn't one, and there won't be anytime soon. One has to wonder about the agenda of someone who's willing to claim otherwise.

The *Christian Science Monitor* utilized this editorial in preparing a Sept. 15, 1998 story, Lots of Students, Not Enough Teachers.

Dr. Feistritzer is president of the National Center for Education Information in Washington, D.C.

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Teacher Quality and Alternative Certification Programs

by C. Emily Feistritzer
Testimony before the House Committee
on Education and the Workforce, May 13, 1999

Teacher Quality and Alternative Certification Programs
STATEMENT OF DR. C. EMILY FEISTRITZER
President
National Center for Education Information
Washington, DC

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Thursday, May 13, 1999
2175 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC

The Administration and the Congress of the United States are being called upon again to respond to the growing need for more and better teachers. According to the latest teacher supply and demand projections, the nation will need to hire 2.2 million people to teach who are not currently teaching in the nation's elementary and secondary schools in the next decade. There is mounting concern about teacher preparation and the quality of the teaching force.

Alarms have also been sounded about the numbers of teachers who are teaching "out of field", i.e., teaching a subject for which they have neither an academic major nor a minor.

While none of these issues warrants the degree of hand wringing the news of them has generated, they do point to some serious problems in this country regarding how teachers are trained, licensed, recruited and hired.

I have been asked by you to address the issue of alternative teacher certification routes and the benefits of these programs in bringing quality individuals into the teaching profession. Let me begin by providing some history of how alternative teacher certification came to be.

teacher certification routes" meet the demands of academic rigor.

The really effective alternative teacher certification programs include these components:

- A strong academic coursework component.
- They are field-based programs, meaning that individuals get into classrooms early in their training.
- Teacher candidates work with a qualified mentor teacher.
- Candidates usually go through their program in cohorts, not as isolated individuals.
- Most of these programs are collaborative efforts among state departments of education whose responsibility it is to license teachers, colleges and universities that historically have had the responsibility for educating and training teachers, and school districts who actually hire teachers.

Three states stand out as having exemplary alternative teacher certification program routes that are widely used in their states and have a significant impact on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals for teaching: New Jersey, Texas and California.

All three of these states report that teachers certified through their alternative routes perform as well, and, in some cases, better, on certification examinations as their counterparts who completed traditional teacher education programs.

Administrators in schools where these teachers teach report high levels of satisfaction with their performance.

New Jersey was the first state to enact legislation for an alternative route for certifying teachers in 1984. The reason New Jersey initiated its program was to come up with a better solution to bringing non-traditional candidates into teaching other than issuing them emergency certificates until they fulfilled all the requirements for a regular teaching certificate -- a process that usually involves teaching right away, with no orientation or instructional support, much less training, while taking education courses at night and during summers. New Jersey set out to design a new program that involved actively recruiting liberal arts graduates and putting them through a school-based program, in collaboration with universities, that entailed the candidate working with a mentor teacher, as well as formal instruction while teaching. New Jersey's alternative teacher certification program produces 20-25 percent of all the new teachers hired.

The state of Texas first implemented a single alternative teacher certification program in 1985 in the Houston Independent School District, justifying the program on teacher shortage projections. Legislation passed in 1989 by Texas legislators eliminated the shortage requirement. Texas now has 27 alternative teacher certification programs throughout the state. These programs produced 14 percent new teachers hired in the state in 1996-97.

California has been struggling with finding ways to bring qualified individuals into teaching to meet its rapid and huge demand for teachers. Like other states across the United States, California has sought to cope with overall growth among the school-age population, as well as continuing, rapid expansion of minority student populations. And,

Other areas of concern regarding demand for teachers are: inner cities, math and science, bilingual education, and special education. Data support that response to those demands is being met. Surveys of individuals who had inquired about alternative teacher certification conducted by the National Center for Education Information in summer 1992 showed widespread interest in teaching in all parts of the country, all types of communities -- including inner cities, and in all subject areas.

The recent survey of Troops To Teachers shows that one in four (24 percent) TTT teachers is teaching in an inner city school. Thirty-nine percent of them said they were willing to teach in an inner city and 68 percent indicated they would be willing to teach in a rural community. This compares with 16 percent of public school teachers who currently teach in inner cities and 23 percent who teach in rural areas.

Alternative routes for preparing and licensing teachers are attracting large numbers of highly qualified, talented and enthusiastic individuals to the teaching profession. Applicants to these programs number in the thousands. Most are highly educated, life-experienced adults who want to teach and to improve America's educational system. They will do whatever is necessary in the way of preparation in order to accomplish those ends. Many of them think alternative routes not only make the most sense, but also provide the best preparation for the real world of teaching.

The Congress could assist in efforts to raise the overall quality of teachers in this nation by supporting efforts in the states, institutions of higher education and local school districts in the development and implementation of alternative programs for the preparation and certification of non-traditional candidates who seek to become teachers.

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APPENDIX C: McREL's Follow-Up to the Policy Forum

MEMORANDUM

To: Doug Christensen, Judy Catchpole, Wayne Sanstead, Ray Christensen, Andy Tompkins, Kent King

From: Tim Waters

Subject: Follow up to the McREL August 14-15 policy forum

Date: September 1, 2000

My thanks to each of you for your support of and involvement in our policy forum. I hope you feel your time was well spent. You did a great job of assembling strong state teams. Their information and perspectives made for a rich discussion. We are analyzing the evaluation forms participants completed before they left. We will use their feedback to inform the design of next year's forum. If you've had any additional feedback from your team members since returning home, I would appreciate your passing it along.

At the end of the forum, Doug Christensen did a nice job of summarizing the discussion and highlighting areas and ways in which McREL can support your efforts to ensure quality teachers and teaching in your schools. I thought it might be useful to give you a written version of my responses for use as a tool for setting follow-up priorities and for holding us accountable for what I said we would do. Accordingly, as I reported on August 15, our 2001 annual work plan will include the following categories and activities.

I. **Professional Development** – Forum participants addressed a regional need for effective mentors for teachers and principals. There is also high interest in workshops for teachers on effective instructional practice in a standards-based classroom.

McREL's response

A. We will develop a "train the trainer" program designed for those people in McREL states who work with potential teacher and administrator mentors.

B. We have already developed a workshop for teachers on the effect size of various instructional methods. One feature of this workshop links specific instructional strategies and activities to the types of knowledge embedded in content standards. This workshop has been field-tested in McREL states. Many of the participants in our field-testing sites (currently, some 100 trainers/staff developers) are prepared to use the workshop materials to do this training on their own. Training kits will be disseminated to these individuals early in 2001. McREL is prepared to train and provide training materials to 100 additional trainers in 2001.

II. **Link Policy and Research** – Forum participants suggested that too many policy initiatives lack the benefit of current research in the area of concern. There is a need to more effectively connect state and local policy makers with the most current and relevant research findings on emerging issues in the region.

McREL's response

A. In 2001, we will organize a regional panel to advise us on urgent and emerging policy issues expected to have the most direct impact on teaching and learning (curriculum, instruction, assessment, and achievement) in our states. We will work with Chiefs to select an individual from one of their state educational associations or other appropriate groups who can represent the needs and interests of schools and school districts on policy development, interpretation, and implementation that impact the local level. This panel will be asked to assist us in setting annual priorities for this dimension of our policy program.

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This regional policy advisory panel will be asked to assist in tailoring McREL's materials to increase their utility for local policy makers and district leadership. Additionally, the individuals on the panel will be asked to play an active role in helping us to formalize partnerships with the associations and/or networks in their states that can help disseminate materials to local policy makers and policy implementers.

B. During the next REL contract period, 2001–2006, we will conduct our own research and compile research syntheses for use by policy makers. Topics will be determined based on our REL proposal and ongoing work with Chief State School Officers and the panel mentioned above. Studies and topics already planned and/or suggested include the following:

Studies already included in our REL proposal

- Analysis of state policies on teacher professional development;
- The impact of state policies on the availability and preparedness of teachers in the region
- Compensation issues and needs
- Characteristics of nationally recognized teacher preparation programs

Studies requested for which we will need to pursue additional funding

- Models of alternative preparation and licensure and their relationship to various behaviors and practices
- The relationship of school size to student achievement and other success indicators
- The relationship of school success and student achievement to resource allocation at the school level
- The efficacy of distance learning

The topics included in our REL proposal will be discussed during the December 18–19, 2000 meeting of the Chiefs.

C. We will continue hosting an annual policy forum. Topics for the forum will be determined based on guidance from the Chiefs. **Proposed dates for the 2001 forum are August 13 and 14 at the Inverness Conference Center.**

III. **Regional Data Collection** – There is an interest in the development of a regional data profile of teacher supply and demand that can be replicated at the state level. This profile should help clarify the nature and scope of shortages or surpluses in the Central Region, inform state and local policy development, and identify effective practices. Examples of the kinds of data to collect include the following:

- Numbers of teacher candidates by grade levels, disciplines, and specialties
- The productivity of alternative or "fast track" programs
- Locations and characteristics of districts within the region unable to fill vacancies
- State-level alternatives for increasing the portability of licenses, retirement programs and experience

McREL's response

A. McREL will design and begin collecting data for this profile in 2001. Priorities regarding what data to collect, methods of data collection, templates for formatting, and strategies for dissemination will be established based on additional guidance from Chiefs. This topic will be placed on the December 18-19, 2000 meeting agenda.

IV. **Technical Assistance** – Forum participants identified several forms of technical assistance they believe McREL can provide. The Chief State School Officers requested that McREL continue to host and facilitate semi-annual meetings of this group. It was also suggested that, when appropriate, McREL make key personnel available to conduct legislative briefings or provide testimony to legislative committees. Finally, it was noted that several McREL state liaisons attended the forum. Doing so enabled the state teams and the liaisons to identify specific strategies or activities to incorporate into state service plans.

McREL's response

A. We will continue to host two CSSO meetings per year for the purposes of roundtable discussions, monitoring policy forum follow-up work in progress, discussing possible collaborations on institutional development opportunities, reviewing regional needs, and informing McREL's general research and service plans.

B. Key McREL personnel will be available to conduct legislative briefings and provide testimony to legislative committees to inform policy initiatives with current research in the areas of standards-based education, teacher quality, leadership development, comprehensive school reform, early literacy development, and uses of technology enhanced learning. Requests for McREL's involvement in legislative briefings, or assistance in recruiting expert testimony should be coordinated through the offices of the CSSOs.

C. McREL will continue to host an annual policy forum. At the 2001 event, members of the McREL field service staff who serve as state liaisons will attend to be certain that state service plans reflect the outcomes of the forum.

This memorandum will be reviewed as part of the McREL CSSO meeting scheduled for December 18–19, 2000. By that date, we should also have a "draft" service plan developed for each of our states. In light of the state plans, the Chiefs and McREL staff can establish the priorities referenced in II – B and C, III – A, and the coordination referenced in IV – B.

Pc: Forum participants
Commissioner Moloney
McREL Management Council

APPENDIX D: Evaluation Report

McREL Policy Forum
August 14-15, 2000
Executive Summary of Participant Evaluations

DESCRIPTION

As part of McREL's leadership role in its specialty area of curriculum, learning, and instruction under Task 7 of the OERI contract, the laboratory convenes an annual policy forum. The forum is designed for invited stakeholders from McREL's seven-state region who work with policy issues in legislative offices, governors' offices, state departments of education, and institutions of higher education. The purpose of the forum is to assist policymakers in using research to inform policy. The goals of the forum are: a) to inform participants about McREL's role as information provider/facilitator re: education policy development, especially through research; b) to discuss the national outlook and share state perspectives on key policy and legislative issues of common interest among the states within McREL's region; c) to gain insights into local/field perspectives on the practical implications of policies discussed during the forum; d) to identify next steps to move from research to policy to practice; and e) to maintain the idea of building an annual policy seminar to serve the needs of the central region states. As a result, participants are expected to gain a better understanding of policy issues, be able to use the information acquired during the forum to inform policy development in their states, be able to share this information with colleagues in order to "scale up" research-based educational reform efforts to new contexts and populations, and know how to access McREL's resources to obtain additional information on policy issues as needed. It is also expected that McREL staff participants will learn how research and practice can inform policy development within the region and how the Laboratory can help translate research into policy and practice.

McREL's fourth annual policy forum was held on August 14-15, 2000. It focused on issues related to improving teacher quality. The event began with lunch and networking time, a welcome to and overview of the forum, and announcements. The agenda featured presentations by Dr. Calvin Frazier of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), Dr. C. Emily Feistrizter of the National Center for Education Information (NCEI), and Dr. Donna M. Gollnick of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Next was a moderated question and answer session with the speakers and audience reactions to the three presentations followed by breakout sessions for state team meetings. After the state team meetings, participants shared the state perspectives on the practical implications of policy issues by reporting out to the entire group of attendees. The second day of the forum began with breakfast, followed by reflections on the previous day, "role-alike" small groups, and reporting out to the larger group. The forum concluded with a discussion of the anticipated next steps for education research to inform policy development, i.e., *Where do we go from here? What can McREL do to help?* As in previous years, materials were provided in advance of and during the forum. This document provides a summary of the participant evaluation results for the 2000 forum.

Participants

A total of 46 people participated in the policy forum — 30 stakeholders, 10 McREL staff members, the 3 speakers, and 3 guests. It should be noted that 6 of the 7 states in the central region and all of the identified role groups were represented at the forum. Representation by state included 7 participants from Wyoming, 6 from Nebraska, 5 from Kansas; and 4 each from Missouri, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Representation by role included 9 from a state department of education, 7 from an institution of higher education, 4 from a state legislature, 2 from a governor's office; and 8 "others" who represented state associations and state boards. It is important to note the linkages between the policy forum and other McREL policy work. Five of the participants currently serve on the McREL Board, one also serves as a policy representative on McREL's State Facilitation Group, and 4 had previously attended a McREL policy forum. The McREL staff participants included the Executive Director and Deputy Director, the Vice President of Field Services and 4 members of the staff, the Directors of Policy Initiatives and Communications, and a Senior Program Associate who coordinated various aspects of the event.

Twenty-two (73%) of the 30 regional participants completed and returned the 20-item participant evaluation form, which included questions about the participants' background, the extent to which the forum had achieved its goals, the quality and utility of the event, and how the forum could be improved for next time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, McREL's 2000 Policy Forum was very well received and noted for its quality and utility. Respondents agreed that the purpose of the forum was clear to them from reading the advance materials and that the materials were helpful in providing information pertinent to the forum agenda. They also indicated that the forum achieved its goals of providing national, state, and role perspectives on a key policy issue of common interest. The goals of identifying ways for McREL to inform policy development within the region, enhancing the participants' awareness of research relevant to policy, and identifying next steps to move from research to policy to practice were achieved moderately to extensively.

Most of the respondents rated the opportunities for participation and input at the forum and the session's overall quality as excellent. The reasons given for the overall ratings of high quality included the valuable discussions of policy issues, the rewarding interaction and sharing of information with policymakers and colleagues, and the learning of new information. Likewise, respondents identified the most useful aspects of the forum as the speakers, the networking with other participants from their own states, the sharing of information with participants across states, and the discussions in general. Respondents expect to use the information acquired during the policy forum in their work (e.g., in policy discussions, in developing policies and procedures) and they expect to share this information with their colleagues. Fewer respondents reported that they expect to use the information in drafting legislation; however, this was to be expected because not all participants serve in legislative roles. Based on the forum's overall success, this event should be continued.

When asked to identify the one thing about the forum that could be improved for next time, a few respondents suggested that more time could be provided for discussion — in small groups, in state teams, and/or in open discussion. Overall, few suggestions for improvement were offered. It is important to note that in contrast to previous years, respondents did *not* identify attendance and representation as areas for improvement. However, given that Colorado was not represented at the forum, staff should continue to assess and build upon current recruiting strategies to obtain adequate regional participation in future events.

Ratings indicated that the goal of determining next steps to move from research to policy and practice was moderately achieved and respondents suggested few specific follow-up activities to help them in using research after the forum. However, McREL's Executive Director has since taken the initiative with follow-up by sending a memo to the Chiefs identifying the ways in which McREL can support the Chiefs' efforts to ensure quality teachers and teaching. The memo, which outlines the specific activities that are included in McREL's annual 2001 work plan, will be reviewed as part of the McREL Chief State School Officers meeting in December 2000. McREL should continue to be proactive in helping forum participants in identifying next steps for McREL to help in moving from research to policy to practice.

The topics suggested by respondents for the next policy forum included policy issues such as support for standards-based classrooms; development of leadership and school leaders; performance-based assessment, licensure, and compensation; use of technology; and a research update including regional data on effective policy and practice for improving student achievement. These suggestions should be reviewed with participants along with any emerging topics and burning issues before the policy forum agenda is set in future years.